

# Seasonable Advice

CONCERNING

Ecclesiasticall Affairs;

OR,

The Prudent Speech of a Learned Privy  
Councillor

TO

King James the 5th<sup>1</sup>

OF

S C O T L A N D.

About the Year, 1539,

Occasioned by the diversity of Opinions  
in matters of Religion then in that

K I N G D O M E.

Presented to the publick view, by a Cor-  
diall wel-willer to the Peace and Tranquillity  
of this KINGDOME.

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*London, Printed for Edward Brewster at the Crane in St. Pauls-  
Church-Yard. 1661.*

Seal of the

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The President of the United States

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*Seasonable Advice*  
CONCERNING  
*Ecclesiasticall Affairs, &c.*

**T**He Kingdome of Scotland now began to be divided in Opinions of Religion; they which held the Helm of State, labouring to Reconcile them: the King was sore perplexed, and uncertain what course to follow; suppress them he could not; to give way to them without shaking of the strongest beams of the policy of his Kingdome, seemed to him impossible. His Privy Councillors being more of his Antient Servants then Nobles or Church-men, as they favoured, gave their severall Opinions, some one way, some another: a freedome of speech being given, one of them as they were in his Chamber together spake to this purpose,

*SIR,* Amongst the many blessings your Subjects do enjoy under this your Government, this is not the least; that for the Weal of your Majesty, and for the Publick good of the Kingdom, the meanest of your Subjects may freely open his mind to declare his Opinion

unto you his Sovereign: and never there was a time in which grace, good and sound Council should be delivered to your Majesty, if it this, and the difficulties of the Common-Wealth do not require it.

The State of your Kingdom is troubled with diversity of Opinions, concerning Religion. It is to be wished, that the one only true Religion were in the hearts of all your Subjects: (since diversity of Opinions of Religion and Heresies are the very punishment of Almighty God upon men for their horrible vices and roaring sins: and when men forsake his fear and true obedience, God abandoneth them to their Opinions, phantasies in Religion, out of which arise partialities, factions, divisions, strife, intestine discords, which burst forth into civil Wars, and in short time bring Kingdoms and Common-Wealths to their last period) but matters arising to that height and disorder, as by all appearance they are like to advance in this Kingdom: The number of Sectaries daily increasing, without dissembling my thoughts to your Majesty, the preservation of the people being the Supreme and principal Law which God Almighty hath enjoyed to all Princes: I hold it more expedient to give place to the exercise of both Religions, then under pretence and shadow of them to lessen the Common peace of your Subjects to be torn in pieces. What can I do? Sir, I advise you to do with these Separatists: either they must be Tolerated for a time, or they must altogether be removed; and that by death or banishment.

So soon as a Prince begins to mow, banish, kill, burn his people for matters abstract from sense, and altogether Spiritual, he becomes as it were a plague unto them. It is an error of State in a Prince for an Opinion of pi-

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say, to condemn to death the Adherers to new Doctrines  
for the constancy and patience of those who voluntarily  
suffer all Temporal afflictions; and doubt it self for mat-  
ters of faith, it is up numbers who at first and before they  
had suffered were ignorant of their Faith and Doctrine,  
not only to favour their cause but to embrace their Op-  
inions; Pity and Com-miseration opening the Gates  
Thus their beliefs spreadeth it self abroad, and their num-  
ber dayly increaseth.

It is a lesse error of State to banish them; banished  
men are so many enemies abroad; ready upon all occasi-  
ons to invade their Native Country to trouble the Peace  
and Tranquillity of your Kingdome. To take Arms a-  
gainst Sectaries and Separatists, wil be a great enterprize;  
a matter hard and of many dangers. Religion cannot  
be Preached by Arms: the first Christians detested that  
Form of proceedings; force and compulsion may bring  
forth Hypocrites not true Christians. If there be any  
Heresie among your people this wound is in the soules;  
our soules being spirituall substances, upon which fire and  
Iron cannot work, they must be overcome with spiritual  
Arms. Love the men and pity their errors.

Who can lay upon a man a necessity to believe that  
which he will not believe? or what he will believe, or  
doth believe, not to believe? no Prince hath such power  
over the soules and thoughts of men, as he hath over their  
bodies. Now to ruine and extirpate all these Sectaries,  
what will it prove else then to cut off one of your armes  
to the great prejudice of your Kingdome and weakening  
of the State? they dayly increasing in number, and no  
man being so miserable and mean but he is a Member of  
the State. The more easie manner and Nobler way were  
to Tollerate both Religion, and grant a place to two  
Churches



Churches in the Kingdom till it shall please Almighty God to return the minds of your Subjects & turn them all of one will and opinion. Be content to keep that which you may (SIR) since you cannot that which you would.

It is a false and erroneous Opinion that a Kingdome cannot subsist, which tolerateth two Religions: diversity of Religion shaketh not up society, nor barreth civil conversation among men: a little time will make Persons of different Religions, contract such acquaintance, custome, familiarity together, that they will be intermixt in one City, family, yea marriage bed, State and Religion, having nothing common. Why (I Pray) may not two Religions be suffered in a State, till by some sweet and easie means they may be reduced to a right Government? since in the Church which should be Union it self, and of which the *Roman*-Church much vaunteth, almost infinite Sects, and kind of Monks are suffered, differing in their Laws, Rules of Government, fashions of living, dyet, apparell, maintenance, and other Opinions of Perfection, and who sequester themselves from our publick union. The *Roman* Empire had its extension not by similitude and likeness of Religion, different Religions, providing they enterprize nor practice nothing against the Laws of the Kingdome, may be tolerated in a state. The Murthers, Massacres, Battells, which arise and are like dayly to increase among Christians, all which are undertaken for Religion, are a thousand times more execrable, and be more open, plain, flat impiety then this liberty of diversity of Religions, with a quiet peace can be unjust. For as much as the greatest part of those who flesh themselves in blood and slaughter, and overcome by arms the peace of their neighbours (whom they should love as themselves), spoyleing

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and Keverian like famished Lyons sacrifice their souls  
to the infernall powers without further means or hopes  
of their over-recovering or coming back; when these o-  
thers are in some way of Repentance. In seeking liber-  
ty of Religion, these men seek not to believe any thing  
that may come in their brains; but to use Religion ac-  
cording to the first Christian Institutions; serving God  
and obeying the Laws under which they were born.

That Maxim so often repeated amongst the Church  
men of Rome, that the chase and following of Hereticks  
is more necessary then that of infidels is well applied  
for the enlarging and increasing the Dominions Sove-  
raignty & power of the Pope; but not for the amplifying  
and extending of the Christian Religion, and the weal  
and benefit of the Christian Common-Wealth.

Kingdomes and Sovereignities should not be gover-  
ned by the Laws and Interest of Priests and Church men  
but according to the exigency, need as the case requireth  
of the Publick Weal, which often is necessitated to pesse  
and Tollerate some defects and faults. It is the duty of  
all Christian Princes to endeavour & take pains that their  
Subjects embrace the true faith, as that semblably and in  
even parts they observe all Gods Commandments and not  
more one Commandment then another.

Notwithstanding when a vice cannot be extirpate and  
taken away without the ruine of the State: it wou'd ap-  
pear to humane judgements that it should be suffered:  
Neither is there a greater Obligation, bond necessity of  
Law to punish Hereticks, more then Fornicators, which  
yet for the peace and Tranquility of the State, are Tol-  
lerated and passed over. Neither can a greater incon-  
veniency and harm follow, if we shall suffer men to live  
in our Common-Wealth who believe not, nor embrace

not all our opinions. In such things as are for  
the time tolerated, because they cannot without the to-  
tal ruine of the state be suddenly amended and refor-  
med. <sup>grievous in conscience</sup> These men of the same nature, and condition of  
which we are & they worship as we, do one God: they  
believe these very same holy Records, we aim at Sal-  
vation, we may that to offend God: we both yet be-  
fore us our happiness. The difference between them  
and us, hangeth upon this one point, that they having  
found abuses in our Church, require a Reformation.  
Now shall it be said for that we man divers ways to one  
end; understand not rightly one another Language, we  
shall pursue others with firm and sure and extirpate o-  
thers from the side of the Truth. God is not in the bit-  
ter divisions and alienation, & sedition, nor in the ra-  
ging flames of sedition, nor in the Tempests of turbulent  
Whirlwinds of contradictions and disputations, but in  
the calm and gentle breathings of peace and concord. If  
any wander out of the high way, we bring him to it a-  
gain; if any be in darkness we shew him light, and kill  
him not. In Musickall Instruments, if a string is out of  
time, we do not frettingly break it, but leisure-  
ly vere about to concord: and shall we be so churlish,  
brutish, unchristian, so wedded to our own superstitious  
Opinions, that we will barbarously banish, kill, burn &  
those whom by loved sweetnesse we might readily win  
and recall again? Let us once and merit of those men by  
reason let them be cited to a free Council, may be they  
shall not be proved Hereticks: neither that they main-  
tain Opinions condemned by ancient Counsels, let their  
Religion be compared and parallel'd with the Religion  
of the first age of the Church.



(7)  
Shall we hold this people worse then the Jews, which yet have their Synagogues at *Rome* it self? let them receive instructions from a free and lawfull Council, and forsake their errors, when they shall be clearly and fairly demonstrated unto them: Heresie is an error in the fundamentall grounds of Religion. Schisme intendeth a resolution to separation. Let a good Council be convoked, and so if they be ready or not to reunite themselves unto us. That which they believe is not evil, but to some it will appear they believe no, not enough, and that there is in them rather a defect of good then any habit of evil. Other points, when they shall be considered, shall be found to consist in externall Ceremonies of the Church rather in the substance of of Doctrine, or what is essentiall to Christianity. These men should be judged before condemned, and they should be heard before they be judged: which being hastily and dprightly done, we shall find it is not our Religions but our private Interests and passions whic troubleth us and the State.

The King followed not this Opinion but gave himself over to the Counsel and Government of the Prelates which in a few years brought inevitable destruction both on himself and Kingdome.

## FINIS.

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There is new published the *Female Duel* or the Ladies-Looking Glass representing a Scripture Combate about buisiness of Religion between a Roman-Catholick Lady, and the Wife of dignified Person in the Church of *England*. Sold by *Edward Brewster* at the Crane in *St. Pauls-Church* yard.